
MISSOURI OZARK TRAIL COUNCIL

October 25, 1997

AGENDA

- Introductions
- Status Reports
- T-Shirt Update (Deb)
- Equestrian Event Update (Marsha)
- Ozark Trail Web-Site Update (John)
- Next Meeting Date

**MISSOURI OZARK TRAIL COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 25, 1997
MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

PARTICIPANTS:

Deb Schnack, Department of Natural Resources
Carolyn Blatz, United States Forest Service
Nancy Feakes, United States Forest Service
John Daves, Corp of Engineers
James Gavin, Meramec River Recreation Assoc.
John Roth, Mozark
Eugene Vale, Onondaga Cave State Park
Bruce Linders, American Youth Hostels
Jim McInroe, American Youth Hostels

Paul Nazarenko, United States Forest Service
Marsha Copeland, Missouri Equine Council
Jim Garden, United States Forest Service
Dean Hodapp, Sierra Club
Jenny Hodapp, Sierra Club
Teresa Kight, Department of Conservation
Dan & Louise McKeel, Interested Citizens
Fred Finder, American Youth Hostels
Bruce Bailey, AmeriCorps

The October 25, 1997 meeting of the Ozark Trail Council convened at approximately 10:00 a.m. at the Meramec State Park Visitor Center. The meeting was called to order by Debbie Schnack, Trail Coordinator, Division of State Parks. Following the introductions the minutes of the May 10, 1997 Ozark Trail Council meeting were approved as written.

STATUS REPORT:

SIERRA CLUB (Dean Hodapp):

Dean reported the Blair Creek Section through Pioneer Forest had been mowed and there had been at least one other outing on that segment. Additional outings were scheduled for November 8 and 9. Overall the 13-mile segment that the Sierra Club maintains is in good condition. The club may begin work again on the loop trail that was laid out in Pioneer Forest and will connect to the Ozark Trail. The new Ozark Trail Council representative from the Sierra Club will be Bob Gistell.

HOSTELING INTERNATIONAL/AMERICAN YOUTH HOSTELS (Bruce Linders and Fred Finder):

Bruce and Fred reported that Hosteling International (HI) had done some maintenance in the Trace Creek Section and additional outings were scheduled in January, February and March. Bruce reported on the Ozark Trail backpack trip sponsored by HI. It appears from initial information that HI will be able to donate approximately \$700-\$800 to the Ozark Trail. A mechanism for using these funds will need to be developed by the Council. There was good response from the article in the Conservationist magazine. The hike does contribute to the local economy. The ages of the 20 participants ranged from 26-60. HI does plan to sponsor the hike next year. If any agencies or organizations could provide information about the hike in their newsletters or magazines it would be appreciated. A special t-shirt was designed for the hike and each hiker received an Ozark Trail patch. The expenses of the trip were off set this year by the donation of a van, some food and the t-shirts.

NOTE: Bruce Linders and Jim McInroe noted that the registration box on the Current River Section has very old cards in it and has not been checked for some time.

UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE (Paul Nazarenko, Jim Garden and Nancy Feakes):

Paul reported that he and John Roth and the Older American group had been working on a ten-mile section of the Trace Creek Section from Highway DD to C. It is now in excellent shape. He plans to complete maintenance on the rest of the Trace Creek Section in the next month. His average is about 1 ½ mile of trail per day. Paul expressed a concern that users do not report when the trail needs attention and he does not have the staff to do routine inspections. He is planning to put up registration boxes at about four locations with a phone number to call if there are problems on the trail. Dean and Jenny Hodapp expressed an interest in taking on maintenance responsibility for a portion of the Trace Creek Section. The Highway 8 crossing and the segment of trail between Berryman campground and Hazel Creek have been approved and construction can begin. The plan is to start next month. The

Council Bluffs Trail is finished. It is an 11-½ mile loop trail around the lake. Approximately ½ mile of trail needs to be constructed to tie into the Ozark Trail. The segment of trail from Highway J to 32 has been laid out but the NEPA process will probably take about two years. Paul is concerned that this segment will never get built because of the seemingly limited amount of use on other sections of the trail. There is no good visitor use data at this time. Jim reported that in the Poplar Bluff district they have been working with the Lake Wappapello State Park staff and MDC to develop a seven-mile loop trail. The loop will connect the state park with the Wappapello Lake Section of the Ozark Trail. The northern portion of the loop is complete and signed. A group of 10-12 Older American's is assisting with the construction. Signs for the road crossings are ordered. The spur trail will not be signed with the Ozark Trail signs but rather with direction wording and arrows. The main, north and south trail is marked with Ozark Trail signs at all intersections and gray diamond blazes. A major concern on the Victory Section is still the Black River crossing. The old highway bridge is being removed. Future plans are for the MDC to construct a boat launch with parking on the Black River and the trail will connect to this area. Fred Stinger's group, the Ozark Trail Club, has provided about 190 hours of maintenance on the trail. The majority of the uses on the trail are horseback riders and mountain bikers. The USFS has an agreement with a group of horseback riders to trim the trail. They also have an agreement with a scout group to do some maintenance. This year there will probably be some trail funding in the budget. Nancy reported for the Salem District. They completed the trail north of Sutton Bluff to Highway J near Oats. The majority of this is new trail. Most of the trail is signed. There was also some light maintenance done on the rest of the Kartraghne Section and northern part of the Blair Creek Section. Nancy expressed concern that with the cut back in forest service budgets it is getting harder to justify expending staff time on the Ozark Trail rather than on the trail that are more heavily used. Volunteer support is becoming more and more critical. Overall the trail budget has not increased and in fact the United States Forest Service has not even had the funds to reprint the section maps. Nancy suggested that the council at some point might want to discuss the possibility of selling trail maps and using those funds to reprint.

AMERICORPS (Bruce Bailey):

Bruce reiterated he has a 16-person crew that can do trail work. The crew is trained to use chain saws and other power equipment. He does need some lead-time in order to coordinate personnel and schedules. The question was asked if the crew would be able to do a general maintenance walk-through of the entire trail. Bruce thought that would be a possibility. He will investigate the idea at the up coming directors' meeting on December 6. He also suggested that the Corps could or may be able to collect GPS data on the walk through if they could use agency equipment.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION (Teresa Kight):

Teresa and the area manager at Park Ranch have been investigating the idea of a six-mile loop trail that would connect with the Ozark Trail in the Stegall Mountain area. They approached the National Park Service (NPS) about tying into Rocky Falls. At this time the NPS does not want to take on the extra responsibility of a new trail. Teresa said MDC might still try to develop a loop on their property. It was pointed out that the parking area identified on the Current River Section on the south end of Peck Ranch does not exist and should be removed from the map.

MERAMEC RIVER RECREATION ASSOCIATION (James Gavin):

Jim stated that the MRRA is starting to focus more on establishing trails along the Meramec River corridor. A recent ISTEPA grant was awarded to St. Louis County Parks and Recreation and the Department of Natural Resources to develop a trail from Castlewood State Park to Glenco. There is also potential for using an abandon railroad to connect Glenco to the new Route 66 State Park. With the St. Louis County flood buyouts it may also be possible to make a connection to Pacific. Jim feels there should be a process for more local representation and participation on Ozark Trail issues similar to the structure of MRRA where each county could be represented. Jim complemented HI/AYH for continuing their effort to promote the trail through the annual backpack trip. He suggested that the agencies should focus on maintaining those sections where the trip is conducted. This would showcase the trail and be good publicity. He also suggested that day hikes be incorporated into the trip. John Roth noted that there is a company in St. Louis "Wilderness Adventures" that also guides hikes on the Ozark Trail.

CORP OF ENGINEERS (John Daves):

This year the Corps did in-house maintenance on the trail rather than contracting the work and John said he was quite pleased with the work. He would appreciate any feed back. There is a problem at Clarks Creek because of the soft bottom. John is working with local saddle clubs to develop a resolution. A GPS survey of the Wappapello Lake Section was completed in the spring. This information will be provided to Deb for the production of the brochure. Fred expressed a concern about the steepness of one particular section of the trail. John will investigate the possibility of putting in switchbacks. A suggestion was made to open up some vistas or side trails so there could be some lake views.

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (Deb Schnack and Eugene Vale):

Eugene said he got quite a few questions about the Ozark Trail at the Onondaga Cave Visitor Center. The question was asked if the Ozark Trail through the Huzzah Wildlife Area was still maintained? Teresa said she had been on site with the manager and they could only find limited segments. Deb reported that she had assisted the USFS and MDC with the layout of the spur that runs from the Wappapello Lake Section to Lake Wappapello State Park. The DNR also constructed a new trailhead for the spur and it will accommodate equestrian trailers. It was officially opened with a small ceremony the first part of October. There is an extensive trail system that can now be accessed from this parking area. In addition to the Ozark Trail and the new spur, the park trail will also link with trails on MDC property. These trails are all open to hiking, equestrian and mountain bike use. Deb announced that Kevin Bollinger is the new park superintendent at Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park, and Dan Wedemeyer has moved to Meramec State Park. Dan has participated in our council meeting in the past.

OTHER BUSINESS:

T-SHIRT UPDATE (Deb Schnack):

Deb reported that all the graphic and layout work is done for the t-shirt. She requested that all the agencies and organizations let her know how many shirts and what sizes they will want. DNR will have the shirts produced but will not have a stack on hand for sale. The information should be provided to Deb by November 14. Deb will remove the statement on the information card that indicates profits from the shirt sales will go toward the Ozark Trail since no fund exists to receive the money.

EQUESTRIAN EVENT UPDATE (Marsha Copeland):

Marsha distributed the draft of a flier for the National Trails Day event, which the Missouri Equine Council (MEC) is organizing. She also gave a brief update of the concept, which involves equestrian rides on various sections of the Ozark Trail. Five leaders have already volunteered to lead rides. Most of the rides would be loop rides of which a portion would be the Ozark Trail. The concept is to have people register for the ride and limit the amount of riders to the parking spaces available. Marsha said she has been asked why certain sections of the Ozark Trail are not open to equestrian use. Deb responded that the reasons vary. Usually equestrian use is not allowed where the trail crosses private property and only a hiking easement could be negotiated with the private landowner. They would not allow equestrian use. Another reason may be because of the sensitivity of an area that the trail traverses. Certain glades are not able to support equestrian use because the trail would become extremely rutted and washed. In the extremely rocky areas they may also be difficult for a horse to negotiate. Teresa also pointed out that the MDC policy is that equestrians are not allowed on the Ozark Trail. There was some discussion about the damage the horses do to the trail and if there were any provisions to address any damage that may occur during the ride. No specific plan to address that issue was in place but a rain date was identified on the flyer. It was suggested that the rain day alternate be used if the trail itself were wet and susceptible to damage and not just if it was raining that day. Another suggestion was made that preference be given to selecting people for the ride based on their willingness to return and do some trail maintenance. Marsha indicated she would explore this idea with MEC. The hikers and backpackers have constructed most of the new Ozark Trail and presently most of the maintenance agreements are with hiking groups. This would be a way for the equestrian community to become more involved and share the load. This event should educate riders on proper ethics and the need that exists for volunteers to assume trail maintenance

responsibilities. All trail user groups need to educate each other on their special needs and trail expectations, but they all especially need to cooperate to meet their higher goal.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was a reoccurring theme through out the meeting related to the need for a better way to recruit and utilize volunteers. Although each individual agency relies on volunteers there is no single source for volunteer coordination. There is also no specific fund dedicated to the Ozark Trail, therefore, each donation for the trail must be directed to an individual agency account. The discussion centered on creating or tapping into an existing not-for-profit organization that could organize volunteers and accept trail donations and distribute them to appropriate Ozark Trail projects.

ASSIGNMENTS:

John Roth will send a list of agency area managers that he is compiling to Deb so she can send it out with the minutes. This will allow direct contact with the manager in charge to report problem areas on the trail.

Bruce Linders will contact Wal-Mart to see if there is any interest in supporting the Ozark Trail since they use the name Ozark Trail on their products.

Bruce Bailey will investigate the concept of the Corps doing a maintenance walk through of the trail.

John Daves will determine if switchbacks are possible on some of the steeper sections of the Wappapello Lake Section.

Jim Carden will check to see if there has been any contact with the Missouri Highway and Transportation Department concerning a potential trail crossing on the Black River Bridge. He will also send Deb a map of the new spur trail.

WEB SITE UPDATE: (John Roth)

John reported that Missouri Ozark Outdoors, Inc. was incorporated as a not-for-profit. A computer network line and software has been purchased. The internet domain name of OzarkTrail.org has been registered. A kick-off meeting was held in August and the infrastructure design and documentation were completed. John presented a three-phased plan, which is attached, outlining the process and schedule for going on line. John also provided a form for those wishing to contribute information for the web site. A decision will still need to be made as to who will verify the information. There has been a slight set back in this whole process because John experienced a house fire and lost some of his computer equipment. However, John still plans to proceed with the project.

NOTE: Daniel and Louis McKeel also have an internet site that provides information about the Ozark Trail.

NEXT MEETING:

The next Ozark Trail Council meeting will be held on May 16, 1998 at Meramec State park at 10:00 a.m. at the Visitor Center.

Prepared by: *Douglas K. Eiken*
Approved by: *Douglas K. Eiken*
Douglas K. Eiken, Director, Division of State Parks
Chairman, Ozark Trail Council

Three-Phased Plan

• Phase One

- Basic Ozark Trail Overview
- Digitized Maps Online
- Contacts & Links
- Scheduled to Go Live by year-end

• Phase Two

- Comprehensive trail site
 - Detailed segment information, narratives, photo library, additional maps, sidetrips and local information
 - Current news & events
 - User input (newsgroups, hiking buddies, trip reports)
 - Additional features TBD
- Work to Begin January 1998
- Schedule to Go Live May 19~~88~~⁹

• Phase Three

- Extended Mapping Capability & GIS
- "Discipline-Specific Content Areas
- Begin Design in Summer 1998

NOTICE



Ozark Trail Council Meeting
Meramec State Park
Visitor Center

May 16, 1998

10:00 a.m.

Please call (573) 751-5360 the week before the meeting to inform Debbie if you plan to attend. No other meeting notice will be sent. Agenda items are welcome.